

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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SUBJECT : MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN CORSICA

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1. SUMMARY - TRADITIONALLY POLITICS AND ELECTIONS IN CORSICA HAVE PROVED TO BE PASSIONATE, COMPLEX, PERSONAL AND, AT TIMES, FRAUDULENT. THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FORTHCOMING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ARE FOLLOWING THE TRADITIONAL PATTERN. THE DAILY PRESS IN CORSICA HAS DEVOTED TO THE ELECTIONS AT LEAST THREE TIMES AS MUCH COVERAGE AS THAT GENERATED IN ALL THE REST OF THE NICE CONSULAR DISTRICT. CORSICAN OFFICIALS HAVE EXPLAINED THAT THIS PHENOMENON IS DUE NOT ONLY TO THE GREAT INTEREST ALL CORSICANS HAVE IN POLITICS IN GENERAL BUT ALSO TO THE LACK OF ENTERTAINMENT OR PREOCCUPATION ON THE ISLAND DURING THIS EXCEPTIONALLY RAINY AND COLD WINTER. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE CLAN, THE FOUNDATION OF THE ISLAND S POLITICS, HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT WEAKENED IN INFLUENCE. IN ADDITION, , THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN EXTENSIVE MEASURES TO ATTEMPT TO ALLEVIATE FRAUDULENT VOTING. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON THE ISLAND FORESEE NO MAJOR CHANGES IN CORSICAN CITY-
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HALLS AS A RESULT OF THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS. IT IS A GENERAL CONSENSUS OF OPINION THAT NATIONAL NORMS ARE USELESS IN ATTEMPTING TO EVALUATE THE CORSICAN POLITICAL SCENE. THE AUTONOMIST MOVEMENT WILL HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE ON THE ELECTIONS : SIMEONI HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET SINCE HIS RETURN TO CORSICA FROM HIS PARIS JAIL CELL. THE RECALL TO PARIS OF THE CORSICAN REGIONAL PREFECT, JEAN RIOLACCI (THE FIRST CORSICAN-BORN

PREFECT TO BE ASSIGNED TO THE ISLAND), IS SEEN AS AN ATTEMPT TO APPEASE THE AUTONOMISTS, WHO HAVE BEEN CLAMORING FOR RIOLACCI'S RECALL FOR THE PAST SIX MONTHS. WITH THE MAJOR EXCEPTION OF THE CITY OF BASTIA, COMMON LISTS HAVE BEEN AGREED UPON BY THE LEFT THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND. IN MOST OF THE 120 COMMUNITIES IN CORSICA, THERE WAS LITTLE DISCORD BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND THE COMMUNISTS IN FORMING COMMON LISTS. IN TWO OF THE MAIN CITIES OF THE ISLAND, AJACCIO AND CORTE, THE MAJORITY IS DIVIDED INTO TWO LISTS FOR PRESENTATION AT THE FIRST ROUND ON MARCH 6. IN AJACCIO THERE IS A STRONG BATTLE BEING WAGED BETWEEN THE INCUMBENT MAYOR WHO IS HEAD OF THE COMITE CENTRAL BONAPARTISTE (CENTER-RIGHT) PARTY AND HIS OPPONENT, WHO HEADS A R.I. LIST. IN BASTIA THERE IS NO COMMON LIST OF THE LEFT. THE PRESENT DEPUTY-MAYOR, JEAN ZUCCARELLI, (RADICAL DE GAUCHE), ORIGINALLY OFFERED THE SOCIALISTS FIVE SEATS ON THE JOINT PCF/RADICAUX LIST BUT THE PS WANTED STRONGER REPRESENTATION AND DECIDED TO FORM ITS OWN LIST. IN CORTE, THE TOWN OF THE FOREIGN LEGION HEADQUARTERS, THE INCUMBENT MAYOR (MAJORITY) IS OPPOSED BY AN RPR LIST. END SUMMARY.

2. AJACCIO - (POPULATION 43.000 - 24.000 REGISTERED VOTERS) THERE IS A SPLIT IN THE MAJORITY IN AJACCIO. THE PRESENT MAYOR, CHARLES ORNANO, IS AGAIN HEADING THE BONAPARTIST LIST OF THE COMITE CENTRAL BONAPARTIST (CCB) WHICH IS A CENTER-RIGHT PARTY UNIQUE TO THE CITY OF AJACCIO. ORNANO IS PRESIDENT OF THE PARTY. HE IS WIDELY CONSIDERED A SURE WINNER. IN ADDITION TO THE CCB, HIS LIST ALSO GROUPS MEMBERS OF THE RPR AND CDS. ORNANO'S OPPONENT IN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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MAJORITY IS JOSE ROSSI (R.I. - GENERAL COUNSELOR), THE YOUNG AND DYNAMIC LEADER OF A LIST CALLED AJACCIO DEMAINE, WHICH GROUPS EIGHT MEMBERS OF R.I. AS WELL AS SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CENTRE GAUCHE. PRIOR TO FORMING THIS SEPARATE LIST OF THE MAJORITY, ROSSI PROPOSED TO ORNANO THAT A COMMON MAJORITY LIST, OPEN TO ALL, BE ESTABLISHED. ROSSI WANTED A LIST WHICH WAS NOT UNDER COMPLETE CONTROL OF CCB BUT RATHER ONE OF A REAL UNION IN ORDER TO GIVE AJACCIO A QUOTE TRUE CONCEPTION OF MUNICIPAL ACTION UNQUOTE. IN REJECTING ROSSI'S PROPOSAL, ORNANO STATED THAT SUCH A REQUEST WAS MOST UNREASONABLE. SINCE THE FORMATION OF AJACCIO DEMAINE, ROSSI HAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN ATTEMPTING TO CHALLENGE ORNANO TO A PUBLIC DEBATE. THE COMMON PROGRAM LIST IN AJACCIO IS HEADED BY HYACINTHE PANCRAZI AND INCLUDES TWELVE MEMBERS OF THE RADICAUX/P.S., TWELVE MEMBERS OF PCF AND TEN MEMBERS OF OTHER LEFTIST PARTIES. THE LIST OF THE COMMON PROGRAM IS, OF COURSE, BLESSED BY NICHOLAS ALFONSI, PS DEPUTY FROM AJACCIO.

3. BASTIA - (POPULATION 60.000 - 27.000 VOTERS)

BASTIA, THE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL CENTER OF THE ISLAND, HAS NO "PROGRAMME COMMUN". DEPUTY-MAYOR JEAN ZUCCARELLI (RADICAL DE GAUCHE) HEADS A LIST COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH THE COMMUNISTS AND THE RADICAUX DE GAUCHES. DESIGNATED FIRST ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR, ON THIS LIST, IS PIERRE GIUDICELLI, P.C. THE SOCIALISTS REJECTED ZUCCARELLI'S OFFER OF FIVE SEATS ON A "COMMON PROGRAM" LIST : THE SOCIALISTS WANTED SEVEN SEATS. ZUCCARELLI THEN AGREED TO GIVE THEM SEVEN, BUT WITH THE STIPULATION THAT HE CHOOSE THE SEVEN MEN. REFUSING THIS OFFER IN EARLY JANUARY, THE SOCIALISTS FORMED A SEPARATE LIST. IT WAS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN ZUCCARELLI AND THE SOCIALISTS WOULD BE RECONCILED BY THIS TIME. ON FEBRUARY 17, HOWEVER, JEAN-PIERRE ORSONI ANNOUNCED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BASTIA THAT HE WILL HEAD THE P.S. LIST. THE SOCIALISTS AGREED TO INCLUDE IN THEIR PROGRAM A PROJECT OF A "SPECIAL STATUS"

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FOR CORSICA AS WELL AS BOTH FISCAL AND LAND REFORMS.

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THE LIST OF THE MAJORITY IN BASTIA IS CALLED UNION REPUBLICAINE POUR LE RENOUVEAU DE BASTIA . IT IS COMPOSED

OF POLITICAL FORMATIONS HOSTILE TO THE COMMON PROGRAM :
ATTEMPTS TO GROUP BOTH THE YOUTH OF THE CITY AS WELL AS
WOMEN WHO HAVE NEVER BEFORE RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE. MOST
CANDIDATES ARE MEMBERS OF RPR, RI AND ENTENTE REPUBLICAINE
BASTIAISE .

4. CALVI - (POPULATION 3,100)
THE PRESENT MAYOR, XAVIER COLONNA (INDEPENDENT DE GAUCHE)
IS HEADING THE COMMON LIST OF THE LEFT. COLONNA IS OPPOSED
BY ALAIN MARCHETTI (RPR) WHOSE MAIN CAMPAIGN THEME IS THE
PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC EXPANSION VIA EXPANDED FACILITIES
FOR TOURISM IN THE AREA OF CALVI.

5. CORTE - (POPULATION 5,500)
CORTE IS HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT AS A HALF-WAY POINT BETWEEN
AJACCIO AND BASTIA. IN A RECENT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
DECISION CONCERNING THE CORSICAN REGION, FUNDS WERE PROVIDED
FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
CORTE, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED ON PAPER OVER A YEAR AGO IN ORDER
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TO SATISFY DEMANDS FOR A CORSICAN UNIVERSITY. THE FOREIGN
LEGION IS ALSO BASED IN CORTE AND, DURING THE PAST YEAR,
HAS EXPERIENCED GRAVE DIFFICULTIES WITH THE LOCAL TOWNSPEOPLE
DUE TO CRIMES COMMITTED BY DESERTERS FROM THE BASIC-TRAINING
REGIMENT. IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE POST COMMANDER,
I WAS TOLD THAT THE SITUATION IS MUCH IMPROVED SINCE THE
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE MOVED TO THE MAINLAND THE BASIC-TRAINING
REGIMENT. THE LEGION IS ATTEMPTING TO KEEP A LOW-PROFILE
IN THE TOWN BY PUTTING MOST BARS OFF-LIMITS. THERE IS
VIRTUALLY NO CONTACT BETWEEN THE LEGION AND THE POPULATIONS
OF CORTE IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE TOWN IS OBVIOUSLY
ECONOMICALLY DEPENDENT ON THE BASE FOR ITS SURVIVAL.
CORTE S CURRENT MAYOR, MR MICHEL PIERUCCI, IS HEADING THE
MAJORITY LIST. HE MAY BE IN DIFFICULTY AS HE IS OPPOSED BY
A LIST HEADED BY JEAN CHARLES COLONNA (MUNICIPAL COUNSELOR OF
HAUTE-CORSE AND NATIONAL DELEGATE OF THE RPR FOR THE CORSICAN
REGION) AND ALSO INCLUDES PIERRE LUCCIANI, A FORMER FIRST
ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR AS WELL AS ANTOINE ORSINI, THE MAYOR S
PRESENT FIRST ASSISTANT. THE COMMON PROGRAM LIST (CORTE
DEMAIN) IN CORTE IS HEADED BY JACQUES RAFFALLI.

6. MANSO
CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR OF THIS SMALL TOWN LOCATED ON THE COAST
BETWEEN CALVI AND PORT WILL BE ALICE SAUNIER-SEITE,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE UNIVERSITIES. SHE IS PRESENTLY
MUNICIPAL COUNSELOR OF MANSO.

7. PORTO VECCHIO - (POPULATION 6,000)
RPR DEPUTY-MAYOR JEAN-PAUL DE ROCCA SERRA, THE LEADER OF

ONE OF THE MORE CONSERVATIVE CORSICAN CLAN, IS AGAIN RUNNING FOR MAYOR OF PORTO VECCHIO. ACCORDING TO REPORTS IN BOTH AJACCIO AND BASTIA, HIS RE-ELECTION CANNOT BE CONSIDERED A SURE THING AT THIS TIME IN VIEW OF FACT THAT HIS INFLUENCE IS ON THE DECLINE DUE TO DEVOTION OF TOO MUCH TIME TO NATIONAL AFFAIRS. HE IS OPPOSED BY SEVERAL DYNAMIC YOUNG MEN (SOME FROM HIS OWN PARTY) WHO CLAIM THEIR INTEREST LIES ONLY IN

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GOOD TOWN MANAGEMENT.

8. COMMENT - THE CORSICAN AUTONOMIST MOVEMENTS WILL, APPARENTLY, HAVE LITTLE DIRECT EFFECT ON THE FORTHCOMING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. IN AJACCIO RECENTLY I WAS TOLD THAT IT HAD BEEN RUMOURED THAT THE AUTONOMISTS WERE PLANNING ON

PRESENTING THEIR OWN LIST BUT COULD NOT MOBILIZE SUFFICIENT FORCE IN THE TOWN. THE SAME WAS TRUE IN BASTIA AND CORTE. THE OBJECTION TO THE PRESENCE OF THE FOREIGN LEGION ON THE ISLAND HAS, IN THE PAST TWO MONTHS, DIMINISHED. DURING THE MONTH OF JANUARY, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WERE NO BOMBINGS OF LEGION TARGETS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER A YEAR. THUS FAR, THE PRESENCE OF THE LEGION HAS NOT BEEN THE SUBJECT OF THE DISCUSSIONS BY ANY POLITICAL PARTY. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO ASSURE THAT VOTING LISTS ON THE ISLAND ARE CORRECT AND HAVE ALSO INSTALLED VOTING MACHINES IN SEVERAL TOWNS. IT IS HOPED THAT, IN THIS MANNER, FRAUD IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WILL BE DIMINISHED TO SOME DEGREE.

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